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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the pedagogical implications of ascribing to sociocultural theory in the classroom, reviewing commonplace terms and concepts that may have lost their true meaning and intent through interpretation and misuse. The paper returns to the initial focus of sociocultural theory, cognition and the mind. Through transcripts of a literature-based college Spanish classroom, it examines the idea of scaffolding while highlighting the development of new knowledge through meaningful interaction, presenting dialogue from the classroom. The paper reviews the following: the development of cognition, language, and literacy understanding in foreign language classrooms; the mind; tools; signs; meaning; social speech; ongoing discourse; co-construction of meaning; heteroglossia; activity setting; goal directed action; the place of language; classroom communication patterns; the foreign language instructor's role; expectations and interpretations; exploratory talk; and coherence and cohesion. Finally, it discusses opportunities for language learning, applying the methodology for discourse analysis in the classroom. The paper concludes that because of various constraints, instructors should use dialogue as verbal scaffolds into discourse. However, because scaffolding has become another "buzzword" in education, it loses some of its original meaning and intention. (Contains 50 bibliographic references.) (SM)

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Sociocultural Pedagogy within the Foreign Language Classroom

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Abstract

Sociocultural theory and pedagogy, inspired by the work of Vygotsky (1978), Luria (1981), Bakhtin (1984), and Volisinov (1973), have been thrust to the forefront of language education and into our classrooms. Research and theory that has used the sociocultural framework as a springboard to present a different aspect and approach to the learning of another language (Wells 1999, Hall 1995, Johnson 1995, Wertsch 1991, Tharpe and Gallimore 1988) is finding its way into our lessons and curriculums.
One of the purposes of this paper is to provide educators and professionals with a clearer understanding of the pedagogical implications of ascribing to sociocultural theory in the classroom by reviewing key terms and concepts that have become common place, but may have lost their true meaning and intent through interpretation and overuse. In order to convincingly argue this point, it is necessary to return to the initial focus of sociocultural theory, cognition and the mind. Through transcripts of a college level literature-based Spanish classroom, the idea of scaffolding will be revisited while keeping with the true intention of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky 1962): the development of new knowledge through meaningful interaction.

Developing Cognition , Language and Literary Understanding

There are numerous avenues that we can take when we try to understand the very nature of cognition and how it is linked to language learning, and how these links can be taken advantage of by students of a second language. However, students will need the guidance of instructors that understand the importance of discourse and opportunities to enter in various forms and patterns of exchanges in the second language. What follows is a theoretical and pragmatic view of the patterns, goals and implications of ways cognition may be constructed in our classrooms

The realm of teaching authentic texts and literature is a complicated one. However, when adding the element of learning a foreign language, the role of the instructor must address establishing necessary

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opportunities for the students to be exposed to the literature and to acquire and improve their second language proficiency and skills.

Language use in a literature-based FLC has a variety of specific functions. Fillmore (1982) condenses these functions into two:

1. To convey the information of what is to be learned: concepts and facts, language use in context, and information about the language itself.
2. To provide opportunities for students to receive linguistic input and to generate linguistic output in order to acquire a second language. (p.43)

Realizing that the above functions are very dynamic when understood through sociocultural lenses helps us to understand that language revolves around the goals set by the context and those speaking. In a FLC, the role of discourse is not as easily realized because we forget to include the human factor of cognition, understanding, and knowledge.

Mind

Within a sociocultural framework, the mind extends beyond a person and people. Mind, according to Bateson (1972) and Geertz (1973), is socially distributed. That is, one's mental habits and functioning are dependent upon one's interaction and communication with others, which are also affected by our environment, context, and history. Within each individual mind there is mental action, which is then mediated socially by tools. These tools allow for individual minds to create and recreate their surroundings with language. Luria (1981) further clarified the notion of a socially mediated mind when he wrote: "In order to explain the highly complex forms of human consciousness one must go beyond the human organism. One must seek the origins of conscious activity and 'categorical' behavior not in the recesses of the human brain, but in the external conditions of life. Above all, this means that one must seek origins in the external processes of social life, in the social and historical forms of human existence" (p.21). This statement is important in understanding how in a FL classroom an individual student relies on more than just the teacher and him or herself. Language is viewed as the primary tool in the FLC as it develops between individuals first then within individuals. As Vygotsky (1981) comments: "Any function...appears

twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category" (p.163). This appearance, then, is aided by the use of tools.

Tools

Tools assist the developing communicative and cognitive functions in moving from the social plane to the psychological plane, or as Vygotsky stated: from the interpsychological to the intrapsychological (Vygotsky 1978). Volosinov (1973) depicts tools as such: "A tool by itself is devoid of any special meaning; it commands any designated function – to serve this or that purpose in production. The tool that serves (a) purpose as the particular, given thing that it is, without reflecting or standing for anything else" (p.10). The purpose of language is goal-oriented towards either an activity or understanding. This notion carries with it one of the purposes of language in a FLC: production of written and spoken language, and the production of understanding and of opportunities. The tool in the foreign language classroom is language that assists in mediating the discourse and activity of those involved in using tools. Tools are outward oriented, as opposed to signs, which are inward oriented, and affect both the user and the focus of their use. An important point to make is that with the introduction of language into an existing discourse, the tools may and often do change, the ensuing actions. And, although tools are external, they are internally oriented as Vygotsky (1978) noted when he wrote about psychological tools assisting the development of lower mental functions into higher mental functions: "In the instrumental act, humans master themselves from the outside – through psychological tools" (p.15). In other words, the constructive principle of the higher mental functions lies outside the individual – in psychological tools and interpersonal relations. These tools, then assist in the creation and use of signs within the individual and the group.

Vygotsky's higher mental functions (such as summarizing, analyzing, and evaluating) are similar to those that Bloom (1956) incorporated into his taxonomy of cognitive functions, and in turn appear in Givens' Florida Taxonomy of Cognitive Behavior (1976). Throughout these various methods of catergorizing cognitive functions and skills, one element remains the same: language is understood as the main tool that assists individuals in obtaining the higher mental functions, and cognitive skills.

Viewing our students in light that allows them to make useof the tools that they have available to them takes some of the pressure off of the instructor in as much as the instructor now can place part of the responsibility for negotiation of meaning and learning on the students. Too often has this tool metaphor been used to describe only teachers. That is, if we have the 'right tools' then we can teach effectively. In part this is correct, but it is essential that students are being exposed to new tools every day in our classes through texts, discussions or by listening. And as part of this shared responsibility, we need to allow students to put the tools into action to mediate their surroundings in whatever ways they choose.

Important in understanding the concept of tools is that they are used during the process of classroom talk more for than a product. Products are what each one of us has in mind when we speak to each other. The process of tool use comes into play when we interact with each other in order to explain our viewpoints. But, tools may first change or affect a student intrapersonally before they may be able to express what they understand interpersonally.

Although some teachers may create a list of tools for their students to use and label them as: agreeing, convincing, or rejecting an opinion, there is an element that the teacher does not see in those examples (and like them). They are treating language as a product instead of as a process. Linguistics is concerned, under our current framework, with the product; and language (utterance, dialogue, and discourse) is seen as a process.

Signs

Signs are multifunctional tools of communication and representation. Signs, according to Volosinov (1973), carry with them certain ideologies that may be recreated and changed according to the situation and those present. Words, and even language itself, is devoid of meaning. It is when language is placed into a social situation that signs and, hence, ideologies are created internally through external experience, which is mediated by and through tools. In a FLC, words can be defined or given their equivalents (casa = house), but this falls short of language learning goals. Language does not hinge upon memorizing vocabulary. After given the "tool" of "*casa*" a student can ask where another person lives, what their house is like, and a myriad questions that lead to a development of the sign "*casa*" in the current social situation (not all houses or homes are alike if we think of family structure and physical traits, especially if we think about cross-cultural differences). Todorov (1984) writes: "The sign is described as

something which refers back to something else, and may mediate social discourse" (p.18). In signs, meaning is created and reinforced or changed according to the given situation.

This concept is crucial to understanding sociocultural thought and those teachers that apply the true meaning of signs, as stated earlier, create a classroom where words are not defined, but understood in context. "Casa" is not a house, but where a certain character may feel safe and protected, such as a park or a restaurant. Those instructors that focus on the lexicon in order to build discourse will often fall into the IRE pattern of classroom talk (fully explained later in this study) where understanding is based on diction rather than fiction.

A sign refers to something else. This point is worth repeating. Just like we are 'explained' by our relationships to those around us, so can a sign. In certain contexts we are teachers where students are referred to us; in others we are sons or daughters where we are referred to our parents. It is not sufficient to give a name, a word, like Harry, Isabel, or Mila. We must be able to see what it refers to, and so must our students.

Meaning

Meaning within a sociocultural framework hinges upon the use of signs. Given the occurrence of signs in a foreign language classroom, however, their meanings may or may not be reinforced by the instructor or the class. Halliday (1975) acknowledges the importance of reinforcement of meaning and signs when learning a language: "(Whatever) the child means, the message that gets across is one which makes sense and is translatable into the terms of the adult language" (p.24). We begin to develop an understanding for the role of the teacher in the FL classroom as one who interprets and reinforces meaning, but this role is not new. Students may also take on the role of interpreters and re-enforcers of meaning in the FL classroom. Halliday's view, as Wells (1999) explains, is "not very different from Vygotsky's general account of the way in which participation in cultural practices leads to modification and transformation of the individual human's natural functions" (p.17). Meaning and signs in a FL classroom are socially introduced, re-enforced, transformed, or modified through dialogue and discourse.

Social Speech

It is necessary to point out the two functions of social speech that stem from and turn into dialogue and discourse. Vygotsky (1978) divided social speech into two functions. One function is that of

communication with others beside the speaker. The other function was labeled by Vygotsky as egocentric speech, which then leads to inner speech. Egocentric speech has also been called private speech (Wertch, 1991), thought to steadily turn into inner speech or 'thought' as one is able to regulate one's own behavior (Lantolf & Appel, 1996). Vygotsky clarified the function of private speech by stating that: " The acquisition of language can provide an entire paradigm for the problem of the relation between learning and development. Language arises initially as a means of communication between (people) and (their) environment. Only subsequently, upon conversion to internal speech does it come to organize... thought, that is become an internal mental function" (p.89).

Ongoing Discourse

The framework of discourse is the next necessary step and is explained by Bereiter (1994): "Classroom discussions may be thought of as part of the larger ongoing discourse. The fact that classroom discourse is unlikely to come up with ideas that advance the larger discourse in no way disqualifies it. The important thing is that the local discourses be progressive in the sense that understandings are being generated that are new to the local participants" (p.9). This statement, and its application in the FL classroom are very important. Students may enter a FL classroom feeling as if what they talk about and how they talk does not matter outside the classroom where the language is being spoken. This, of course, is self-defeating. The central word from above is *progressive*. Progressive Discourse, as explained by Wells (1999), includes students involved in such tasks as agreeing, disagreeing, adding, revising, and clarifying. What is important is that students and teachers move beyond the "utterance" stage of communication, and build on their dialogues. Dialogue helps create discourse that assists in learning a second language.

Co-Construction

By attempting to or actually reaching intersubjectivity, students co-construct meaning as they share various perspectives according to their interpretations and experiences. This type of communication has been understood as "social interdependence" or has been addressed as a type of a "transitive" discourse (Tharp & Gallimore 1988), but one aspect of this type of communication is evident, as Forman & Cazden (1985) note: that by developing and working through the process of co-constructing meaning, that is, reaching intersubjectivity, students (and instructors) do benefit cognitively by engaging in such tasks or discourse.

Wells (1999) writes about what he considers to be the 'sociocultural conception' of co-construction and intersubjectivity. Wells (1999) later adds that the main goal of a classroom based on the sociocultural framework is the "creating and sustaining of a community of inquiry" (p.229). In an effort to provide instructors (and learners) with an outline of just how to create such a discourse, and the various important parts, Wells defines the characteristics that he calls the "Practice of Education" (p.228):

- The activities undertaken are such that, although chosen by the teacher for their cumulative contribution to an understanding of the central theme, they allow for groups of students to make them their own, and progressively to exercise more choice over how they are conducted.
- They involve a combination of action and reflection, and of group work, individual reading and writing, and whole-class discussion.
- Goals are made explicit and the relationship between these goals and operations by means of which they are to be achieved is made the subject of discussion.
- Perhaps most important, there are frequent *opportunities* to express their beliefs and opinions, to calibrate them with those of their peers, and to change them in the light of persuasive argument or of further information.

Viewing instruction and communication through the outline above we can more clearly understand the central role the creation of opportunities takes as the class engages in discourse. The students, in this type of environment, would benefit more cognitively (Engstrom, 1991) and are also given more room to explore what they know about the area being discussed and are given an arena to learn a foreign language.

A community of inquiry includes the instructor. Here, the teacher, although very familiar with the material being taught, may not be familiar with the interpretations and reactions that the students will have. We are defined by the subjects that we teach, in this case second languages, and we find self-validation and recognition in describing ourselves as "French Literature Teachers" or "Spanish Literature Teachers", and rightfully so. To be able to understand a vast area of work, in any language requires commitment and expertise. But as stated earlier, a community shares an understanding of a topic or subject through discourse, rather than a label.

Heteroglossia

When we are coming to terms with others through discourse, we may depend upon the words or the experiences that we have read about or heard. When we try to have our listeners understand us through others' words or experience in the process of reaching intersubjectivity, we appropriate someone else's views. This appropriation of other's views and meanings is what Bakhtin (1981) called heteroglossia: "Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words), but it exists in others people's mouths, in other people's concrete contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own" (pp.293-294). Appropriation of words, at the basic level in a FL classroom, may come through utterances, but appropriation of meaning and understanding come through the process of discourse.

If we look back to the formation of the concept of dialogue mentioned earlier, we see that a dialogue involves three entities; one of which may be outside the speaker(s) or listener(s). This 'outside entity' (i.e. previous experience) comes to light as ventriloquation. As Bakhtin (1981) notes, we find the words that we use already 'lived in' by the intentions and experiences of others. Volosinov (1978) believed that in order to truly understand each other, we must first find ways to 'overcome the word' through discourse.

Activity Setting

Tharp and Gallimore (1988) defined the classroom context of discourse as the activity setting. The activity setting is both fluid and concrete, where the instructor is responsible for providing support for communication:

> The criterion for an educationally effective activity setting is that it should allow maximum assistance in the performance of tasks at hand. The activity setting is a unit of analysis that transcends individuals, and provides a meaningful way to intergrate culture, local contexts, and individual function. (p.130)

Also, within the activity setting framework, Rogoff and Wertsch (1984) lay out the foundation for interpreting discourse in a FL classroom as 'emergent interactionism', where the competent speaker

provides maximum support for communication with another. Within the activity setting, the instructor has the responsibility to provide opportunities for discourse and to establish goals within the framework of a FL classroom. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) underline the importance of having goals within discourse:

> (These) goals are achieved through group discussions that create discourse meaning structures that are both intermental and intramental. The entire group of teacher and students shares both verbal language and written text, and so this is intermental, simultaneously, these meanings are internalized for each member and become part of the thought system of each individual. (p.132)

Discourse should assist students in reaching their own goals and the ones set out by the instructor as well. Trying to find a balance between directing towards a goal or just 'letting go' to see where the classroom discussion might lead may be one of the areas in which instructors have difficulty deciding on specific frameworks for discussions.

Goal Directed Action

Lave (1977) identified a similar concept to that of Tharp and Gallimore's (1988) activity setting, one he called 'arena'. In this arena, tools and setting are joined by goals. Crucial to the understanding of Lave's 'arena' is that how and when mind develops depends on the tools that one has and develops through interacting in an activity setting. As one develops various and new tools, these in turn also may determine the goals that one chooses, and in turn assist in developing other tools. Within the idea of 'arena' and goal directed action, Lave and Wenger (1991) help us to understand that learning through discourse does not necessarily mean controlling the discourse itself or actively participating in it to any great extent. They used the term 'legitimate peripheral participation' when referring to those students who may reach a goal though not actively participating in progressive discourse. As students become more comfortable with the goal and the discourse in the classroom, they become more overtly active in communication.

The linguistic goals in a FL classroom may be difficult to reach if the students are not able to interact and communicate in the target language. Understanding that via discourse one builds and discovers new tools that assist in cognitive development we realize how the cognitive goals of a FL classroom can be met and put to use outside of the classroom. As Wells (1999) explains:

> Classroom activities should not only lead students to construct a personal understanding of the topics involved that equips them to participate effectively and responsibly in similar and related

activities beyond the classroom, but it should also encourage the development, disposition, and the necessary strategies to adopt the same stance independently in new and unfamiliar situations. (p.91)

In using the word 'stance', Wells refers to a cognitive rather than a linguistic goal. As a clear goal, a discourse-driven classroom understands that discourse, although responsible for building linguistic knowledge of the FL, also may effect how students communicate in their first language on similar topics. After all, psychological tools affect how a person chooses to communicate and not just in which language.

The above concepts, when placed into practice, build on each other. As stated earlier, the goals of classroom, if cognitive, will lend themselves to a more open, discourse driven type of classroom talk. This envisioned classroom talk that will incorporate Wells' notions of the practice of education. Instructors should become aware of these concepts, but are to stop short of defining them for the students. "Lessons on heteroglossia" should not be overtly emphasized. Concepts such as these for part of larger process and are not products to be quantitatively measured. They are tools that we use to adjust, build, reshape and develop cognition through language. And that may be why instructors feel a bit uneasy when asked to apply such a framework to their classrooms. These tools, this type of talk, are not products that can be easily measured for evaluative purposes. In part, this why in literature-based foreign language classrooms instructors tend to spend their time defining words (as will be shown later) and not talking about concepts. Words have a definition whereas concepts require understanding of meaning.

The Place of Language

Instructors are charged with keeping a certain degree of control in any classroom environment. And in a second language classroom, that control can be even more powerful because we are not only the linguistic experts, but also the conceptual mentors of the exchanges that take place in our classrooms. Almost everything that we do evolves into a pattern, for better or worse. But, as educators and professionals we need to take a look at these patterns in order to try to improve our teaching and the students' learning. These patterns emerge and are not arbitrary. Although our decisions are not always conscious ones, they are still decisions that are based on experiences, interactions, and reactions.

In order to help define what is considered discourse in a FLC , it is necessary to take a look at traditional classroom dialogue that has been outlined by Lemke (1985, 1990) as consisting as of three basic

moves: Initiation, Response, and Follow-up / Evaluation (IRF / E sequence). This type of interaction has been shown by Lemke to consist of 70% of all classroom interaction that he studied in secondary schools. According to Wood (1992) the teacher asks too many questions of the "answer-known" variety and does not allow for the student to take on the role of initiator in class "discussions". Lemke (1990) criticizes the Triadic Dialogue (Initiation – Response – Evaluation) found in classrooms because on the surface students seem to be participating more, and the IRE sequence may encourage maximum student participation in a teacher-fronted classroom.

It is a mistake to think that this type of pattern of classroom talk only happens in 'lower level' FLC. As we shall see later, the IRE sequence has a very stong presence in the patterns of communication in a literture-based FLC. This presence, often misunderstood for discourse, fosters the patterns of talk and interaction that instructors believe to be 'discourse'. Viewing discourse beyond the present evaluative IRE sequence places more of the burden on the instructor to use the IRE sequence for a purpose, rather than to just railroad students into only one interpretation. The IRE sequence, if nothing else, is comfortable. It provides a framework for interaction in a language that is not our own in a second language classroom. This said, then what needs to be pointed out is the necessity to focus on what we may call our own in the event our cultural and linguistic egos take hold of our self perceptions: our thoughts and our reactions. As instructors we value interaction, the IRE sequence provides the initial impetus for that, and realistically, we have to make sure that the basic facts of a story are clear (the story may take place in a king's castle as opposed to a monastery). This should not be construed as an argument against the IRE, just the opposite. It is an argument for using it appropriately. After making sure that all of students understand the basics of the work that is being read: setting, characters, and plot, for example; interpretation takes hold of our cognitive domains and linguistic skills are placed into play to try to express those domains.

Patterns of Classroom Communication

Johnson (1995) makes a very interesting point when she writes that patterns of classroom communication are not random because instructors establish and maintain patterns of communication by the use of task structure, content, and language. Instructors hold certain assumptions about what their classes will resemble and do. Establishing patterns of communication is not necessarily a negative aspect of the FLC. If certain patterns of communication lead the students to certain goals then the pedagogical

aspects of the methodology are carried out by task completion. Trueba (1989) also understands that patterns of classroom communication exist, but believes that in order for students to be given the greatest number opportunities for discourse patterns must vary in order for them to participate and learn the language and the content. The IRE sequence may serve a purpose, but once the purpose is served (establishing the main characters of a novel, for example), instructors stay with and rely on the IRE sequence because of their limited expectations and views of the students in their classes (Carrasco 1981). If students interpret the expectations of the instructor as such, then classroom patterns of communication will be set by both the teachers and students, perhaps not allowing students to give or present opportunities for discourse because they believe that "it is not how the class is taught" (Hymes 1981). Patterns of communication may constrain, inhibit or enhance discourse and opportunities for discourse in the FLC.

The Role of the Instructor

The role of the instructor in the literature-based FL classroom is not easily defined. On the one hand, instructors are charged with presenting the literature and authors in such a way that their students will be readily equipped to understand the various historical literary movements and styles. On the other hand, instructors are also charged with helping students refine not only their cognitive abilities, but linguistic ones as well. So, a not-so-simple question rises from these roles: Can an instructor in a literature-based FL classroom help students acquire their second language and to what degree? This may very well become an extension of this study upon its completion. But first we should focus on the complexity of the instructor's role.

As Steiner (1972) notes: " (The instructor) may find out that he is no longer a dispenser of information or a performer. He becomes an organizer, a writer, a diognostician, a counselor, and a teacher. Most teachers have had the potential to fulfill these various roles, but they have not had experience playing them" (p.308).

The key word mentioned above is that of "experience". Without experiencing the various roles as a student, instructors then rely on those models they know best, their own teachers. And, most likely, their own teachers understood FL classrooms to be reproductive environments where the students and teacher reproduce, through dialogue, the text being studied. If instructors are to assume various roles in the

literature-based FL classroom, then the classroom must be seen and understood as a productive environment where ideas are shared through the target language.

Instructors may not feel comfortable guiding their students 'linguistically' in the literature-based FLC because, after all, they are studying the literature, not the language, necessarily. But, if we take into consideration Santoni's (1971) reflections on the use of linguistic guidance by the instructors (for example: asking a question in the past tense to assist a student in using the same tense in the answer). Santoni (1971) writes: " Some may argue that such (a linguistic focus) will end intuition. On the contrary, control of language does not mean control of ideas" (p.435).

Santoni's point deserves further attention and explanation. In an environment where language and literature are precariously balanced, instructors may tend to believe that they control the literature through the language being spoken in the classroom. Although, to some extent this may be true (asking questions about the readings for which the teachers already knows the answer), and since it is literature (supposedly) that is to learned, then we, as instructors try to focus on controlling what is to be learned: literature. But, as will be shown later in the analysis, what really ends up being controlled is the language, the discourse surrounding the literature. Perhaps, if instructors approach literature though discursive lenses, then the class will feel more comfortable using their linguistic skills (which are being guided by the instructor) to explain and explore the text.

For example, we can see the types of questions that fall under these two approaches:

- Literature through Language
    - Who is the main character of the story?
    - When is the story set?
    - Where does this work fit into the author's development?
    - What does "gallows" mean?
- Language through Literature
    - Why do you think that the main character ran away from his family?
    - Would you have enjoyed living in the town where the book takes place? (Reasons for this...)

- Which criminal would be most afraid of the gallows in this story? (Reasons for this...)

Interestingly, when we review the questions from above, the second set of questions have a much more 'literary' feel to them. If we try to think of possible anwers to all of the questions from above, then we can see the amount and typeof language that is necessary to answer these. Also, if we take the teacher's role, the questions that would afford more opportunities for classroom talk and communication would be those in the second set. Understandibly, a baseline or context has to be set and understood by the teacher and students, but what is crucial is that we move beyond the baseline and build upon both the readings and language.

Lemke (1985) writes about instructors exerting 'thematic and interactional control' in language classrooms. Instructors in literature-based FLC may have more of a challenge keeping thematic control if the interaction moves beyond the triadic discourse mentioned earlier. The control of the 'theme' in the literature-based FLC may not seem problematic at first, but even though students may be reading a work of literature with "a theme", they cannot help but interpret it. This interpretation is what may shift the thematic control to the students.

Expectation and Interpretation

The two sides of classroom communication can be clearly divided into expectations and interpretations. Interestingly, the review of current research in the teaching of literature in the FLC addresses or assigns expectations to the instructor and interpretation to the students. Logically, we see that communication is the combination of both expectation and interpretation in understanding classroom talk. But what is not made clear is that in order for classroom talk to move beyond the IRE sequence or dialogue level, clarification of expectations and interpretations must occur within *both* the students and the teacher. Expectations should not be understood only as what is written on the syllabus, and interpretations should be open for discussion and exploration.

McCarthy (1998) sums up the complexity of the literature-based FLC and the role of the instructor as the following: " What is called for at this level is (attempting to achieve) the hybrid goal of advanced language competence (and) increasing literary competence" (p.12).

As we shall see, the dichotomy between expectation and interpretation is also reflected in the curriculums and syllabi of courses. But, what makes these even more precarious is that our goals within these syllabi are "material-focused". That is to say, they may be to present the literary works of a certain country, era, or literary movement. An obvious question arises from the previous statement: Then what should guide our courses, cognitive skills? In a sense, the answer is yes. What is being proposed is not a return to the days of Socrates when thinking was the material that gave rise to substance. But, in a curriculum driven world where, at times, covering the material may take precedence, cognitive skills are seen as a natural byproduct of the material. Is thinking solely a byproduct of literature or is it necessary to think before producing or reading literature? Instead of placing cognition at one end or the other of this spectrum, it should be placed throughout the process of interacting with the text. If this is reflected in the courses and syllabi, then we need not change the materials or subjects taught, but only adust our approach.

Exploratory Talk

McCarthy's goal may be achieved through what Van de Berg (1993) understands as offering two different types of questions: analytic and interpretive. Both of these types of questions have their uses in the FLC. According to Van de Berg, however, interpretive questions cause the most anxiety, so instructors may tend to rely on more analytical (known answer) questions so as not to cause the students any unneeded stress. Lack of interpretive questions may cause students to use less exploratory talk, defined by Johnson (1995) as:

> Generating ideas (at the same time) as they (the students) participate in negotiation of meaning as they reached a consensus about the specific question they wanted to ask. Moreover, (students using exploratory talk) were allowed to select the topic of discussion (within the theme), overlap talk, control the direction of discussion, and self-select (volunteer) when and how to participate. (p.151)

The area of 'exploratory talk' and discourse in the literature-based FLC has not been fully investigated, and doing so, will help to understand and clarify the nature communication in a literature-based FLC.

There are unlimited number patterns of communication in a second language classroom, just like in our daily lives. However, it is when an instructor falls into repeating a pattern that does not extend the

thinking or language of the students that we have to begin to take a close look at the goals and objectives of the class. As we all know, teaching (and learning) is an endeavor that is at the very crux of our existence. But, at times we sacrifice the content of what is to be taught for the form.

That is to say that, as stated earlier, the content of language is thought and meaning. These depend upon a dynamic and fluid (and somewhat guided) interaction in the classroom. It is when we break out of these prescribes patterns that we begin to really learn, teach and think for ourselves.

Coherence and Cohesion

Understanding the difference between discourse coherence and discourse cohesion plays an important role in helping to recognize and form discourse within the literature-based FLC. Coulthard (1977) states that "the relation between (utterances) are aspects of grammatical cohesion" (p.10). He offers the following example:

A: Can you go to Edinborough tomorrow?

B: Yes, I can.

According to Coulthard, it is the grammatical link of *can* that facilitates discourse coherence.

Discourse cohesion is rhetorically linked, according to Coulthard, and falls into the category of appropriate or inappropriate, according to the context. He offers this example of discourse cohesion (p.10):

A: Can you go to Edinborough tomorrow?

B: The (airline) pilots are on strike.

B's answer requires that A have some background knowledge (that there is an airline strike). Although B's utterance is grammatically correct, without cohesion there is no discourse.

In a FLC, coherence and cohesion are important but have different roles. Coherence may be an end unto itself: "just say it right." Cohesion may be more difficult to achieve because it does not rely on grammar only, but on interpretation, meaning, response, and context.

Discourse in the FL classroom builds on understanding that has come to exist over time and in various situations with both the students and the teachers acting as speakers and listeners throughout communication. All discourse has meaning embedded into it by the utterances of the participants.

Opportunities for Language Learning

This section applies the methodology for discourse analysis in a literature-based FLC. This data analysis offers insight into the later findings, and further defines the inner workings of the methods used during the present study. The application of the methodology can be seen throughout in the selected examples of classroom talk.

The classes that were observed, recorded and transcribed were all SPN 3201. This is the "bridge course" between language or linguistically focused courses and the purely literature-based courses such as 'The Latin-American Short Story' or '18th Century Spanish Drama'. The catalogue from the university describes the course, SPN 3201, as having a strong conversational component. This analysis sets out to understand what is meant by "conversation" (classroom talk) in a literature-based foreign language classroom such as SPN 3201.

The class was observed for a total of nine full weeks of class time. Also, the class was observed two more times later in the semester. The only difference noted in the two classes that were observed later in the semester was that the students had group presentations prepared about various cultural topics. The university in which the class is taught is on the semester system. A total of 17 classes were observed during the nine weeks of instruction. There were no students who were native speakers of Spanish, although there were several that did have Hispanic heritage. In addition to the instructor, a total of 21 students gave the researcher permission to record, transcribe and analyze their classroom talk: 6 males and 15 females.

The instructor has been teaching Spanish for 18 years and has taught this course three times before the present semester. The instructor is a native speaker of Spanish and holds the Ph.D. in Hispanic Literature.

Dialogue Example #1 takes place after the students had read a story about a Cuban immigrant's experiences when beginning a new life in the United States. This example is typical of the text-centered talk that took place when talking about the readings. It follows the IRE pattern as well, and more importantly, as will be shown later, it creates opportunities for discourse that are not taken by the instructor.

/ indicates that the next speaker overlaps at this point.

// indicates that two speakers start simultaneously.

+ indicates a pause, ++ indicates a longer pause

Dialogue Example #1

1. T: OK. La lectura que nosotros tenemos para hoy es sobre... es de una
2. situación de un exiliado cubano. Vamos a ver. ++
3. ¿Quién es el autor de la lectura? ¿Alguién sabe? Quién es el autor? ¿Que hace
4. el autor?
5. Luis Fernández Caudi. Es periodista en Miami.
6. Y como ustedes saben hay varios periódicos en Miami, varios periódicos en
7. Español.
8. Ahora lo que es bien interesante es que es un relato autobiográfico, de su
9. propia vida.
10. ¿De que trata la lectura, de que trata? ¿Qué hace este personaje principal? +
11. S1: El obtiene un trabajo con / Coca-Cola.
12. T:/ El obtiene un trabajo en la compañía Coca-Cola. OK.

_____ Topic Shift

13. ¿En que momento se desaroya, en que tiempo se desaroya el relato?
14. ¿Cuando, que año, a que año se refiere la historia, (S2)?
15. ¿No sabes?
16. ¿ (S3), a que año se refiere la historia?
17. S3: Un mil noventa y ...
18. T: Mil, Mil +
19. S3: / Nove..
20. T: / Novecientos++
21. S3: ¿ sesenta y uno?
22. T: Muy bien. Mil novecientos sesenta y uno.

_____ Topic Shift

23. Entonces, hace cuántos años de esa fecha fue la revolución cubana?
24. ¿Hace cuántos años de esa fecha? +
25. S4: ¿Dos / años?

26. T: / Dos años. ¿La revolución comenzó en mil novecientos, (S5)?

27. S5: cincuenta y nueve.

28. T: / Mil novecientos cincuenta y nueve. Bien, así que apenas hacia dos años.

29. O sea que él acababa de llegar a vela a Miami. OK.

_____ Topic Shift

30. ¿Qué profesión tenía el protagonista en Cuba? +

31. S6: Era abogado. /

32. T: / El era abogado.

33. El era abogado, ¿ y cómo era su vida en Cuba?

34. ¿ Cómo era su vida?

35. ¿ Cómo es la vida de un abogado?/

36. S6: / Comfortable +

37. T: La vida es cómoda. Muy bien.

_____ Topic Shift

38. ¿ Cómo viste?

39. Muy elegante, cuando la gente viste muy bien.

_____ Topic Shift

40. Pero ahora hay un cambio.

41. ¿Por qué no puede ser abogado en la Florida?

42. ¿Alguien sabe?

43. ¿Conocen las reglas? (S7)? No? ++

44. S8: ¿Hay que tener licencia? /

45. T: / Sí, obviamente para ser abogado, ser médico, hay que tener licencia. Hay

46. que pasar los exámenes. El famoso Florida Bar.

_____ Topic Shift

47. De hecho, esto es muy interesante porque muchos inmigrantes vuelven a la

48. escuela graduada, la escuela profesional, para sacar la licencia de la

49. profesión. ¿Pero qué pasó con este señor, con el protagonista?

50. No podía ser abogado.

51. Hay que tener permiso, una persona que, obviamente el no era ciudadano,

52. ¿hay que ser ciudadano para trabajar en los Estados Unidos?

53. (S9), ¿por qué?

_____ Topic Shift

54. ¿Qué hay que tener? /

55. S9: / Visa para trabajar./

56. T: / Hay que tener una visa para trabajar, exactamente.

57. No hay que ser ciudadano. OK.

58. Vamos a hacer rapidamente las preguntas de "entendido", rapidamente.

Clearly, the IRE sequence is seen in the transcript above, and we also notice more examples of instructionally-embedded IRE (where the instructor answers her own questions) in lines 1-12 and 37-52 where embedded IRE patterns are evident in lines 3-9,38-40, and 49-51.

This type of classroom talk mainly addresses known answer type questions where specific facts from the text are used as a point of reference and evaluation of text comprehension for the instructor. It is important to understand that the primary objective, stated in the syllabus of this course, is to improve oral proficiency. Although lengthy, the above transcript is representative of about 75 % of the classroom talk that occurred in this classroom during the time it was observed. Naturally, the question arises: How do student develop oral proficiency in with this for of classroom talk as the predominant pattern? Noting the explanations of mind and social speech that were made earlier, there is absence of effort to develop the mind and cognition through meaningful interaction. What reveals itself as important is the product, rather than the process. And, as seen above, the product is in the mind of the instructor rather than an understanding that is come to by the students and the teacher. Also, as noted before, if language is the main tool that we apply to effect mind and cognition, then according to the 'tool use' metaphor students that utter only limited responses to 'answer-known' type questions, are not being presented with the opportunities to develop their minds through language.

Of the classes observed and analyzed, there no instances of utterance–level talk by the students. In other words, the instructor responded to everything that the students said, therefore creating dialogue.

However, there were numerous instances of utterance-level talk by the instructor. That is to say that the students were not given the opportunity to respond to questions asked by the instructor.

Utterance-Level Talk Example #1:

1. T: A menudo no nos damos cuenta de que pensamos en términos muy
2. estereotipados. +
3. S4: Falso. ++
4. T: ¿ Sí? ¿Por qué?
5. Entienden la oración, ¿A menudo no nos damos cuenta de que pensamos
6. en términos muy estereotipados?
7. No nos damos cuenta de los estereotipados.
8. Yo creo que es cierto.
9. En mi caso yo tengo unos estereotipos y no me doy cuenta que son
10. estereotipos.

The utterance-level talk occurs in line 4. Por que? (Why?) is never answered by any student. This example occurred during a text-focused activity and follows the typical IRE pattern. The instructor moved on to the next statement in the activity after line ten. This example clearly illustrates what is meant by 'lost opportunities' to assist in developing the understanding of the students (and the teachers) through meaningful interaction.

The original framework of this study did not address what has been realized and defined through the observations, transcriptions, and analysis as 'Teacher Monologue'. Teacher Monologues are instances of talk that are spoken by the instructor that may be intended to clarify a certain point or give an explanation, but the information given is not made use of by the instructor to assist in the development of dialogue to discourse. Teacher Monologues usually took place at the end of an IRE sequence as seen below. Being topically related to the dialogue, the Teacher Monologues were treated as part of the dialogue surrounding the answer or response by the student.

Teacher Monologue Example #1:

1. T: Hay un juego de palabras con la palabra 'ingenuo'. OK.
2. Es una palabra nueva para ustedes.

3. ¿Qué significa la palabra ingenio, (S13)?

4. S13: ¿Wit? +++

_____ Topic Shift

5. T: OK. La palabra ingenio tiene doble significado.

6. ¿Cuáles son los productos importantes en Cuba?

7. ¿Los productos de exportación?

8. ¿Ron, tabaco y azúcar?

9. El azúcar es uno de los productos más viejos y el azúcar, y para poder

10. producir azúcar hace falta un ingenuo azucarero, sugarmill, hace falta un

11. ingenio azucarero.

_____ Topic Shift

12. ¿Y a qué clase social pertenecían la mayoría de los exiliados cubanos de

13. los años 60?

14. ¿A qué clase social? ++

15. S20: Alta /

16. T: / A la clase social alta.

_____ Topic Shift

17. Así que hay un chiste, no, porque todos hablan de los ingenios que tenían

18. en Cuba. Porque todos tenían algo. Tenían tierra... pero el era abogado.

19. El dice (reading) sucede que yo no había tenido otro ingenio en Cuba que

20. el muy poco que quiso Dios ponerme en la cabeza.

_____ Topic Shift

21. Qué significa ingenio en esta segunda oración? (reading again) Sucede

22. que yo no había tenido otro ingenio en Cuba que el muy poco que quiso

23. Dios ponerme en la cabeza.

24. ¿Así que se refiere a...?

25. A la inteligencia. A, en inglés, Wit. Así que no tenía el ingenuo de azúcar

26. pero si tenía el ingenio que le dio Dios.

that their classes allow for scaffolding, and this may true, but it is not the process that is under scrutiny, but the goal or reason for scaffolding. Scaffolding our students to reach our own personal understanding of a piece of writing, without giving them the opportunities to reach their own conclusions taints the underlying reasons for scaffolding. Remember that the context in which we are placing scaffolding is in a literature based foreign language classroom. This context is very different from a first year foreign language classroom. Scaffolding may occur for linguistic or grammatical reasons, but the scaffolding that concerns us here is conceptual and cognitive in nature. In the literature-based foreign language classroom, scaffolding has been misunderstood to mean and imply the idea of how to have students understand what the instructor has in mind. And this is only one-half of the equation. Scaffolding is not a one-sided phenomenon. If true scaffolding is to occur in literature- based foreign language classroom, then mutual understanding of each other's interpretation must be the goal. Moving towards only one interpretation has more in common with the concept of railroading than scaffolding. In railroading, the student is seen as an important part of interpretation, but the proper interpretation has already been set as the end goal. Student and instructor move alongside each other, laying tracks to a predetermined location. Those that build the tracks the fastest usually 'do better in class', and those that decide to explore their surroundings are often described as off-track. Interestingly, if we take a moment and picture a real–life scaffold, alongside a building, and then imagine it from above after it had fallen down, it resembles a train track.

Becoming aware of the limits that we may place on our students by our own interpretations at the onset of our lessons affords us the opportunities to recognize those boundaries in order to assist the students in developing their own understanding of the material presented to them in hopes of improving their overall language proficiency and skills. Understandably, there are certain grammatical and linguistic truths in our classrooms that do not offer any interpretations: Cervantes was man, and "Saltar" will always be a verb that will always mean (by itself) 'to jump'. Instructors that present their interpretations of readings and events as linguistic truths in the second language do not allow students to develop their own understanding, their own interpretations. Just because their instructor believes that Don Quijote is the ultimate 'caballero', should not keep the students from believing and supporting that he was just an old Spanish horseman with a few mental problems.

2. Tanzi: What does star mean?

3. T: What does this star mean?

4. Yuko: It's in the sky.

5. Tanzi: I know, but what does that mean?

6. Oh, what did it mean... what did it symbolize?

7. Tanzi: Yeah, symboli...?

8. T: What did it symbolize? What did it stand for? ... when you saw that star what did you think of?

10. Tanzi: Yeah, what, symboli... ? What did it...?

11. T: What did it symbolize?

12. Tanzi: What did it...?

13. T: Symbolize, what did it symbolize? OK, for the Jews it symbolizes David – one of their religious leaders – and for Jews this star is a symbol of their belief in their religion.

14. Tanzi: It symboli...

15. T: Symbolizes

16. Tanzi: It symbolizes Jew religion?

By the end of this excerpt Tanzi is able to reformulate the question by using the word 'symbolize' appropriately. This verbal scaffold later is made use of when the teacher asks the students what they would feel or do if they were made to wear the yellow star that symbolized Jews. Clearly, this verbal scaffold made it more possible for classroom talk to evolve into discourse.

Assistance by verbal scaffolding can also be given by other students in the class (Donato 1994, Brooks and Donato 1994) to other students. The importance of verbal scaffolding becomes apparent when the classroom talk moves beyond the dialogic level and into discourse.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Scaffolding has become another buzzword in our educational arenas, and when this does happen, unfortunately and ironically, it looses some of its original meaning and intention. Instructors may believe

27. Ahora, la segunda, la tercera parte del relato es cuado él llega a la

28. casa, y está la hija.

29. ¿Cuántos años tiene la hija?

30. ¿Cuántos años tiene la hija? /

31. S20: / Cuatro

32. T:Tiene cuatro años. Muy bien.

Lines 1-5 in the above example follow the typical IRE pattern of talk. In lines 6-11 we notice once again the instructionally-embedded IRE previously defined, and lines 12-16 are a typical IRE pattern once again. Lines 16-26 are defined as Teacher Monologue because the information presented to the students did not assist in developing or extending the dialogue into discourse, and was not referred to in later classroom talk. Also, the main point of the Teacher Monologue is an explanation of the word 'ingenuo'. According to the student response in line 13 this meaning is already understood. If one were to take away lines 16-26, the classroom talk that followed would probably not have changed. As we see, the instructor follows an IRE pattern of communication again in lines 27-32, which are not at all related to the understanding of the word 'wit' in Spanish. Remembering our discussion that centered around "Goal Directed Action", the above goal : to understand the definition of the word "wit" in Spanish, is met early by the student (line 4), but the instructor carries the classroom talk further without expanding or providing opportunities for more interaction different from what was jut said by the students. The students are left to guess what the instructor has in mind, and later the instructor tell them, but quickly moved on to another "answer known" type question.

Verbal Scaffolding

Given the linguistic background of students in a FLC an immediate move into discourse may not always be possible because of linguistic or conceptual constraints or limitations. Because of these constraints and limitations it is important for instructors to use dialogue as verbal scaffolds into discourse. A clear example of verbal scaffolding by an instructor is provided in the excerpt below, which forms part of the ongoing classroom discourse (Johnson 1995, pp.77-79). Johnson notes that in turns 2-16 the instructor is assisting Tanzi in appropriating and understanding the word 'symbolize'.

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